



TESTIMONY OF RALPH ENO
FIRST SELECTMAN, TOWN OF LYME
CONCERNING RAISED BILL 439
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF MUNICIPAL RECORDS

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, thank you and members of the Committee for this opportunity to appear before you this morning. My name is Ralph Eno, I'm First Selectman in the Town of Lyme and I'm here to testify in favor of Raised Bill No. 439: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF MUNICIPAL RECORDS. My views also represent the position of the CT Council of Small Towns which supports the bill.

Lyme will hopefully be embarking on a Town Hall renovation and expansion project in the not too distant future. As a result of an examination of critical needs, part of that project includes construction of a new vault. During this process it was discovered that Connecticut State Library Regulations for Fire Resistive Vaults and Safes, adopted in 1969, do not cover the unique requirements for storage of computer media and electronic records. With municipalities increasingly turning to storage of vital records in a digital format, more stringent controls will be needed to protect electronic files from heat, humidity and magnetic fields.

State Regulations presently specify that vaults must be constructed of concrete which is fine for restricting flames for a certain number of hours, but concrete cannot prevent temperatures and relative humidity in a vault from rising to a level where microfilm and digital files will be destroyed. Further, concrete releases moisture during a fire which could boost humidity levels to a point beyond allowable tolerances for electronic media.

New technology is trending toward so called "modular vaults" which have steel frames with ceramic cores. These units can meet fire restriction standards, control temperature inside the vault and also protect electronic materials from magnetic fields. They are also more easily expandable, portable and cheaper to build. The cost to the Town of Lyme for construction of a traditional vault would run about \$250 per square foot. A modular unit would be \$215 so right out of the gate so to speak there is a minimum savings of some 15% per square foot.

Finally, I respectfully request your support for this bill. I would also suggest that any update process not be made the sole responsibility of the Public Records Administrator. There is a lot at stake here. A lot of us have skin in the game and representatives of the Town Clerks Association, COST, CCM and a representative from the state professional architects association might be able to offer valuable insights resulting in more effective and sensible regulations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have but please bear in mind I am in no way an expert on the subject.